

<b>HUMAN RESOURCES PROCEDURES MANUAL</b>	<b>SECTION 2: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM</b>
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## **I. PURPOSE**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is offered by the Rappahannock-Rapidan Employee Assistance Program through the Family Guidance Services of Fauquier County.

The purpose of EAP services is to assist employees in obtaining counseling and treatment referrals for alcohol and substance abuse problems and/or other personal difficulties. Personal problems may include marital or family difficulties, financial or legal problems, relationship concerns and/or mental health issues.

## **II. SCOPE**

The Employee Assistance Program has four objectives:

1. to motivate employees with personal problems which affect job performance to seek help;
2. to refer employees to the appropriate resources where they can receive help;
3. to restore productivity; and
4. to retain valuable employees.

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Employee Assistance Program provides confidential, professional assistance to employees and their families. The program also provides supervisors and managers with a constructive way to help employees reduce the adverse impact that occurs when personal problems interfere with job performance.

## **III. HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS**

There are three ways a person may enter the EAP:

1. self referral,
2. management referral, or
3. medical referral.

### **A. SELF REFERRAL**

Any employee may call the EAP office for information or to make an appointment to discuss a personal problem.

**B. Management Referral**

A supervisor may also encourage an employee to seek employee assistance services because he or she has expressed a need for some assistance. Managers and supervisors may recommend or insist that an employee seek assistance when there is a noticeable decline in the employee's work performance that is not correctable through supervisory procedures or where there are specific on-the-job incidents which indicate the likelihood of a personal problem. The focus of the supervisor's referral is on the job situation, not on the nature of the problem.

**C. Medical Referral**

The employee's physician may refer the employee to the EAP if a symptom or disorder is diagnosed which may be related to a problem likely to benefit from counseling.

If the employee chooses to accept a referral to the Employee Assistance Program, the employee is assured that no County record, other than the confidential EAP referral files, shall be maintained on whatever is discussed in the EAP office. EAP files are maintained in the strictest confidential manner required by law and ethical practice.

**IV. TYPICAL COUNSELING PROBLEMS**

The Employee Assistance Program will provide short-term direct counseling or referral service for employees on a wide range of personal problems, including alcoholism, drug abuse, emotional problems, marriage and family problems, and financial problems.

**A. DEPENDENCY ON MOOD-ALTERING CHEMICALS**

**1. Alcoholism**

Alcoholism strikes at least ten people out of every 100 who drink. For those who develop alcoholism, life is a progressive downhill slide. Like the common cold, alcoholism knows no racial or economic bounds - both men and women are affected.

Because of the stigma so often associated with this illness, persons with alcoholism tend to deny that they have a problem and cover up their need for treatment. Experience in this field indicates that alcoholics are unable to overcome their illness without an established program to follow. Through EAP, employees who have an alcohol problem would be encouraged to seek and follow through with proper treatment.

**2. Drug Abuse**

"Drug abuse" is difficult to define in simple terms. Many people take drugs and most drug usage is legal and medically prescribed. Occasionally, however, even prescription medication can lead to serious problems. It is when drugs cause legal,

social or medical problems that the term "drug abuse." is used. When a consistent pattern of abuse is present, chances are fairly high that the individual will need professional help to stop the dependency that has developed.

#### **B. EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS**

In a world filled with demands, stress, pressures, decisions and choices, it is possible for depression, anxiety and hypertension to manifest. It is the hope of EAP that the employee who recognizes an emotional problem will seek assistance immediately. If service beyond the EAP counselor is needed, the employee would be referred to the appropriate professional community resource.

#### **C. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY PROBLEMS**

Arguments and other problems are part of marriage, but occasionally arguments and problems seem never-ending. Mistrust may develop, and with it, lack of communication. Deterioration of the marriage often follows. Today, marriage counseling can be an educational experience. Counseling does not attempt to keep the couple together or to separate them - that decision is up to the partners. The EAP can assist with referral to an appropriate counseling resource.

#### **D. FINANCIAL PROBLEMS**

Financial predicaments do not develop overnight. Today's world of instant credit makes living beyond one's means very easy. Thousands of people, from all walks of life, filed for personal bankruptcy last year - many filed for bankruptcy when it was not necessary. If they had sought the help of a financial counselor, that extreme step may have been avoided. The EAP can assist with referral to an appropriate counseling resource.

### **V. COUNSELING SERVICES**

Regardless of the method by which an employee is referred to the Employee Assistance Program, the procedure followed by the counselors is the same.

The initial step is to determine the nature of the personal problem. Secondly, a plan of action, mutually agreed upon by client and counselor, is set up to resolve the problem.

Once the nature of the problem has been determined and there is agreement on the course of action, a referral may be made to other agencies, professional persons or treatment centers best equipped to provide assistance. The EAP counselor will continue to work with these services and with the employee to assure that the best possible assistance and care is received.

